

Problems and Opportunities in Teacher Education in context of National Education Policy, 2020

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Abstract

Education is key for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable society and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the reason to India's continue ascension and leadership on the world's stage in terms of economic process and growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. An efficient teacher education provides a solid ground and impetus to the education system. The present teacher education has been facing many problems related to its various aspects. The new comprehensive National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP 2020), outlines the vision of India's new education system. It provides a promising dimension to the education system in general and teacher education in specific. It also offers remedies to the issues teacher education is facing today. This paper sheds light on the problems of teacher education in India and the remedies in terms of the opportunities the new National Education Policy 2020, offers in order to achieve the goals of equitable society and sustainable development.

Keywords: Equitable, Comprehensive, Multidisciplinary, Integrated, Holistic, Knowledge.

Introduction

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in classrooms, school and outside the school. The National Policy of Education 2020 was prepared to improve the quality of education in the country and was focused on providing education facilities to each and every citizen of the nation. The new education policy must help involve the very best to empower the teaching profession at all stages. Teacher education is important in creating a workforce of school teachers that will shape the upcoming generations. Preparation of teacher is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspective and knowledge. Education is a dynamic process. Teacher performance is the most crucial factor in the field of education. The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. Education plays major role in bringing social change, economic and political development in any society. Education helps people learn right actions at right time. Such an education requires efficient teachers. A teacher is the central figure in the teaching learning process. The future of students largely depends upon the teachers. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up-uptified. Teacher education has not reached the requisite standards. Teachers are still not able to think critically and solve the problems related to different aspects of teaching learning process such as teaching methods, content, organisation etc. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be restructured and revised according to changing times and needs of society. Unfortunately still there are several drawbacks in the teacher education. The new National Education Policy 2020 provides a framework where Centre and States Governments can join the hands to enhance the quality and bring improvement in teacher education, and then only bright future of teacher education would be possible.

Inception and Issue of NEP 2020:

The last comprehensive Education Policy was introduced way back in the year 1986. About thirty-four years later, a new policy, National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is introduced by the Government of India. NEP 2020 thus replaces National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy has the potential of being a huge milestone for India's education system, which definitely provides ways to make India an attractive centre for higher education world-over. The Government of India took the initiative in January 2015, and the actual consultation process for the New Education Policy was started under the chairmanship of former Cabinet Secretary Shri. T. S. R. Subramanian. On the basis of the report of the committee, in June 2017, the draft of NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr. K. Kasturirangan. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was then released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), which was followed by a number of public discussions and consultations. Thereafter, the Ministry undertook a rigorous consultation process in formulating draft of the policy. In the process of origin the new policy document has been updated, revised and finally approved on 29th July, 2020. National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29th July, 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The policy envisions an India-centred education system that contributes directly to transform the nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all the citizen of the nation. The policy provides a comprehensive framework from elementary education to higher education including the vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy projects to change and transform India's education system by 2021. The policy unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both, the Central government and the State Governments.

NEP 2020: An insight

- What's it about?

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) will bring in ambitious and dramatic change that could transform education system in the country. It will bring about revolutionary changes in the education system of India.

- Vision:

NEP 2020 aims at building a global best education system rooted in Indian ethos, and aligned with the principles enunciated in the discussion below, thereby transforming India into a global knowledge superpower.

- Thrust Areas:

NEP 2020 is necessarily addressing the crippling challenges that have affected the Indian Education System for over last few decades. Certain thrust areas of the policy are:

- In Primary Education, poor literacy and numeracy outcomes
- In Middle and Secondary Education, high dropout levels, curriculum inconsistency
- In Higher Education, a lack of multidisciplinary approach and flexibility with regards to subject choice, assessment as well as a skill-gap
- Moreover, overall thrust areas for NEP 2020 include childhood care, curriculum design, language/medium of instruction, teacher training, teacher appraisal, assessment pattern and evaluation and exam format. A new assessment centre called, PARAKH i.e. Performance, Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge of Holistic Development is proposed to determine the standards for education. • Lastly, issues with regulation, recruitment of teachers and the absence of common standards and norms for universities are the additional areas in this new policy Principle Guidelines:

- Flexibility, No hard separations, Multi-disciplinary, Emphasis on conceptual understanding, Regular formative assessment for learning, Respect for diversity and local context, Total equity and inclusion, Resource efficiency, Proper recruitment and service conditions, Tight oversight and regulatory system, Outstanding research, Continuous policy making, Rootedness and pride in being an Indian, Education being a public service,
- Substantial investment

Major Problems of Teacher-Education

Following are the major problems related to Teacher Education in present times:

1. Outdated and Faulty Curriculum:

Curriculum is traditional, theoretical, rigid, and lacks connection between theory and practice. It is less realistic and not related to general life and society.

2. Problem of selection of students

No clear-cut process, No consideration to attitude, aptitude, or any achievement during admission.

3. Lack of use of Scientific and Technological innovations:

Traditional, theoretical and stereotypical methods are still more prevalent in the teacher education training institutes.

4. Lack of control over teacher education institutions:

NCTE is regulatory body which controls the functioning of teacher education institutions and holds control over the quality education there. It sets and maintains the standards of education in these institutions. But in past few years teacher education institutions have so drastically increased in number that it becomes difficult to monitor all the institutions. Some of these institutions are compromising on quality and standard for the sake of monetary benefits only.

5. Problem of Isolation of institutions

The teacher training institutes lack integration with the real life and the community and thus stand isolated.

6. Monotonous and Traditional methods of teaching:

Traditional methods of teaching are still widely used for teaching. Students are not exposed to new innovations and experimentation. Latest classroom communication devices have still not found a place in institutions.

7. Lack of Innovation and Creativity:

Creativity plays an important role while performing any task. But this factor is ignored while delivering knowledge in teacher education programmes today.

8. Lack of development of Life Skills:

Life skills are certain skills which are essential for personal development and growth. These skills enable man to deal with the life's difficulties. Main issue is that teacher-education is memory based i.e. there is no active involvement of students, so there is a lack in the development of life skills among the students, which are essential for all round development of students.

9. Lack of constructive Co-curricular activities:

The co-curricular activities in teacher education are unsystematic and inadequate.

10. Quality Issues:

Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the problems related to teaching methods, content, organisations etc. more knowledge of theoretical principles is emphasized and teachers are not able apply these principles in actual classroom situations.

11. Decline in Values in the times of Globalization:

Due to globalization and advancement of science and technology world has come closer. Every transaction is going to be online. But there are several deviations particularly of young students who are prone to malpractices. In this sense mobile culture, internet, face book and twitter etc. have impacted young minds in a negative way leading to decline in values.

12. Social Issues:

There are various social issues today our nation is confronting. These are population explosion, unemployment, diversity and communal tension, etc. Teacher can safeguard students against these social problems as they are sensitive towards these issues.

13. Problem of teaching practice:

This is one of the main problems of teacher education. Teaching practice is neither adequate nor properly conducted. Student teacher does not take the task of teaching practice seriously. Also on the other side the school and school management pose problems as they do not co-operate and do not get ready to allow teaching practice session. They do not allow proper implementation of the teaching practice.

14. Lack of Supervision:

Students need supervision while practising skills, developing and delivering lessons, to develop confidence in facing the classroom situations. But there is lack of good supervision and supervisory staff in teacher education institutions.

15. Lack of proper Evaluation:

Evaluation process in teacher education does not test the students' achievement overall. Examinations are conducted in the end of the session. External and internal assessment is subjective. Sometimes to get good result the colleges offer good internal assessment to the undeserved candidates also.

16. Lack of proper facilities:

Large number of education colleges has unhealthy financial conditions. They lack in basic facilities such as experimental schools, laboratories, libraries, hostels, and proper and safe buildings. Some of them even are running in the rented buildings.

17. Duration of the courses:

The duration of teacher education programme has been one year for a long time. The teacher education curriculum which includes theory, practical and internship in actual schools require much more time for its effective implementation. National curriculum framework also recommends for two year duration of teacher education programme but could not implement. So there is a need to extend the time period of present teacher education programme.

18. Lack of competence among teacher educators:

Student teachers are less competent to deal with the problems of classroom and behaviour problems of students.

In the last decade a number of experiments were done with the Teacher Education in India. In 2014 NCTE came with a new Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in India and all of a sudden the duration of the two main teacher education courses B.Ed. and M.Ed. was changed from one year to two years but the results were the same, there was hardly any improvement in the quality of the output. NEP 2020 recommended that by 2021, a new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT in the country taking on board the real stake holders that is the Teacher Educators and the aspiring teachers as well. Though its formulation is still under process, we can be optimistic that the two National agencies will conduct brain storming sessions with all grass-roots level stakeholders before finalizing the new curriculum for teachers in the country. There is no harm if we take some positives from the countries who have done exceptionally well in the school education.

India being a young country with large pool of students Teachers and preparing such a big number of teachers is one of the biggest challenges. Thanks to the wonderful document of NEP2020 we now expect a robust teacher education system in the country. Teacher education has been the main focus of previous educational policies as well that is why Kothari commission, way back in 1964-66, has laid great emphasis on teacher education by saying – *the destiny of a nation is shaped in its class room*. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession. The motivation and empowerment of teachers is required to ensure the best possible future for our children and our nation. The following recommendations benefiting the teacher education can easily be adopted without putting any burden on the state budget.

Opportunities in teacher education through the provisions of National Education Policy, 2020**1. Comprehensive Teacher Education Programmes:**

The basic teacher education programmes and shorter local teacher education programmes to be made available at BITEs, DIETs, or at school complexes for eminent local persons who can be hired to teach at schools as 'master instructors', for promoting local professions, knowledge, and skills, e.g., local art, music, agriculture, business, sports, carpentry, and other vocational crafts.

The B.Ed. programme shall now be a 4-Year integrated comprehensive programme and the students shall be admitted at 10+2 Level. All the teacher education institutions shall be converted into multidisciplinary institutions to develop multi-skilled teachers. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. The 2-year and 1-year B.Ed. Programmes will also be offered, but only by the same multidisciplinary institutions offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed., for those who have already obtained Bachelor's Degrees in other specialized subjects and to those who have obtained a Master's degree in a specialty and wish to become a subject teacher in that specialty. Provisions for high-quality B.Ed. programmes in blended or ODL mode to students in remote or difficult-to-access locations and also to in-service teachers have been advocated.

2. Approach to Teacher Education:

Recognizing that the teachers will require training in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, teacher education will gradually be moved by 2030 into multidisciplinary colleges and universities. As colleges and universities all move towards becoming

multidisciplinary, they will also aim to house outstanding education departments that offer B.Ed., M.Ed., and Ph.D. degrees in education.

3. Special Educators:

There is an urgent need for additional special educators for certain areas of school education. Some examples of such specialist requirements include subject teaching for children with disabilities/*Divyang* children at the Middle and Secondary school level, including teaching for specific learning disabilities.

4. Recruitment of Teachers:

Teachers shall now be recruited on the basis of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) and same test will be strengthened to inculcate better test material, both in terms of content and pedagogy. The TETs will also be extended to cover teachers across all stages (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary) of school education. For subject teachers, suitable TET or NTA test scores in the corresponding subjects will also be taken into account for recruitment. To gauge passion and motivation for teaching, a classroom demonstration or interview will become an integral part of teacher hiring at schools and school complexes. These interviews would also be used to assess comfort and proficiency in teaching in the local language, so that every school/school complex has at least some teachers who can converse with students in the local language.

5. Service Conditions:

The NEP has recommended that such a service culture may be developed in which the teachers can utilize their ability to do their jobs effectively, and to ensure that they are part of vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of teachers, students, parents, principals, and other support staff, all of whom share a common goal: to ensure that our children are learning.

6. Professional Development:

For the first time in the history of teacher Education it has been recommended that Teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions. Each teacher will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of continuous professional development opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own interests. CPD opportunities will, in particular, systematically cover the latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy and numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment of learning outcomes, competency-based learning, and related pedagogies.

7. Career Management and Progression (CMP)

The much needed positive feedback for doers in the education that is Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted, and given salary raises, to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Therefore, a robust merit-based structure of tenure, promotion, and salary structure will be developed, with multiple levels within each teacher stage that incentivizes and recognizes outstanding teachers. A system of multiple parameters for proper assessment of performance will be developed for the same by State/UT Governments that is based on peer reviews, attendance, commitment, hours of CPD, and other forms of service to the school and the community.

8. Professional Standards for Teachers

A common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teacher Education in its restructured new form as a Professional Standard Setting Body (PSSB) under the General Education Council (GEC), in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organizations in teacher preparation and development, expert bodies in vocational education, and higher education institution.

9. Enculturation of Teacher Empowerment

Teacher empowerment means investing teachers with the right to participate in determining school goals and policies and to exercise professional judgement about what and how to teach. (Bolin, 1989) When teachers are engaged in the reform process, they need freedom and control over their own work. This makes them feel empowered, motivates them to work harder and enhances their commitment to their learners.

- Recognising the contribution teachers can make in reforming pedagogy to improve the learning outcomes, the NEP 2020 gives Teachers autonomy in selecting appropriate pedagogy and encourages them to also ensure socio-emotional learning of their students, which is a critical aspect of holistic development.
- Innovative teaching methods adopted by teachers to improve the learning outcomes will be recognised, documented, and shared widely as recommended practices.
- Close collaboration is recommended among schools within a School Complex as it will reduce teacher isolation experienced by teachers working in smaller schools and create vibrant teacher communities that work collaboratively sharing their best teaching practices.
- To help schools and school complexes evolve into vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of teachers, students, parents, principals, the School managements have been directed to ensure adequate and safe infrastructure, basic amenities and hygiene, computing devices, internet, libraries, and sports and recreational resources to all teachers and students.

Conclusion –

The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. It is a well known saying that teacher is the nation builder. No doubt a lot of stress is given on teacher-education course in India. Unfortunately still there are several loopholes in the system. According to Benjamin Disraeli, ‘*The secret of success is to be ready when your opportunity comes!*’ In the light of National Education Policy, 2020, time has come for the Indian teachers to seize the opportunity and become makers of their own destiny. They need to dream and work hard to achieve them. Furthermore they need to be aware, enthusiastic, empowered

practitioner and need to share their ideas, grow by experimenting and researching, gain insights also from the thoughts, beliefs, and experiences of peer-practitioners. They have to forge beautiful relationships with generations of learners who transition through classrooms and remain a life-long learner. The new National Education Policy 2020 no doubt provides a platform to achieve these objectives and put all these necessities into practice leading to the achievement of the objectives of vibrant society and sustainable development. The new National Education Policy, 2020 would be helpful to Central and State Governments to rectify the problems and bring reforms in teacher education. After the deep study and discussion, it can be concluded that Central and States Governments should work together to enhance quality and bring improvement in the teacher education, and then only brighter future of teacher education is possible.

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